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Matters of State

A dispatch on this page last Friday reviewed the Bang-Jensen case. The opinion of the writer, Lytle Wilson, a veteran Washington reporter, was that "alarm bells" ring dangerously slow in the State Department.

It seems the United Nations official, with his knowledge of Communist infiltration and intrigue in the U. N., could not get to tell President Eisenhower of the situation, and it was a long time before he could pierce the protective ring around Allen W. Dulles, then head of the Central Intelligence Agency.

State Department protocol and channels blocked the Povl Bang-Jensen story, which is now lost by his death disputed as murder or suicide.

Over the weekend the sale of "obsolete" American military planes to Yugoslavia, and training of Yugoslav pilots at American bases aroused the ire of several congressmen.

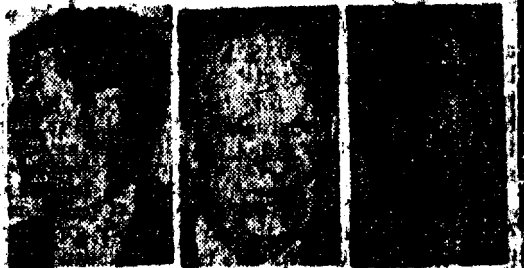
This strange deal was formulated under the Eisenhower Administration. The theory is that by giving Tito's crowd some old equipment at a give-away price we make them our friends. If somebody tried to kid us with old machinery, our reaction would be less than friendly, we suspect.

There are a couple of recent examples of unfortunate advice on Cuba and, farther back, on China.

Our top men base their judgments on opinions of "experts." It has to be that way because George C. Marshall couldn't know all about China, Dwight Eisenhower all about Yugoslavia and John Kennedy all about Cuba.

But it is strange that advice given them has worked to the advantage of the Reds. How expert are our experts, anyway?

The State Department is a sprawling mess of offices that is possibly beyond control of any one man. It has mushroomed with the same complications and errors as the Pentagon. It is high time it underwent a sharp investigation for the adequacy of its career people as well as the necessity for all the assistants and agencies involved.



IN HANDS of advisers have been Kennedy, Eisenhower and Marshall